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Genealogy of Virginia Collier Dennis

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Virginia (Collier) Dennis as a Young Lady

Much of the information posted here is from the Estate of Virginia Collier Dennis of Barnesville, Georgia. Cousin Virginia was a remarkable lady of many interests and passions, one of which was family history. Her preservation of genealogical and family records dating back to the early 1800's provides the basis for this website.

We are grateful to Elaine Collier Neal for the following genealogy of Virginia Collier Dennis.

Collier Ancestors of Virginia Collier Dennis

Barnesville, Lamar County, Georgia

The Estate of Virginia Collier Dennis Was Donated to the Georgia Historical Society, July 2016

The Georgia Collier ancestors of Virginia Collier Dennis begin with Vines Collier and his family who is recorded as purchasing 200 acres from William and Elizabeth Fitzjarril in 1785 and, in the following year, another 400 acres from George and Ann Lumpkin. All acreages were in Wilkes County, but the property on Buffalo Creek where the Colliers built their house would soon become Oglethorpe County, Georgia.

Vines and his wife Sarah had the following children: their birth dates are taken from Vines Collier's Bible.

1. Elizabeth Collier born 28 Nov 1763 in Brunswick County, Virginia. She married Rev. Thomas Dunn, a Methodist preacher, on 23 Mar 1789 in Brunswick County, Virginia.
2. Thomas Collier born 9 Feb 1766 in Brunswick County, Virginia. Thomas served in the 3rd Regiment, GA Militia (Wilkes Co.) and was stationed at Fort Mathews as a private dragoon in 1793 during the Oconee War. He died in 1826 and his brother Benjamin administered his estate in Oglethorpe County.
3. John Collier born 7 Dec 1767 in Brunswick County, Virginia. Married in Oglethorpe County to Patsy Gresham in 1795; secondly to Sarah Durrutt Harris, called Leah, on 10 Jul 1814 in Jasper County, Georgia. John was the first Tax Collector of Oglethorpe County in 1795, Judge of Inferior Court, Oglethorpe County in 1806-1807, Clerk of the Court of Ordinary Randolph County, Georgia in 1808, and continued as Clerk after Randolph was renamed Jasper County, Georgia. John died before 28 Feb 1825.
4. Isaac Collier born 6 Jun 1769 in Brunswick County, Virginia. Married Elizabeth Smith in Oglethorpe County; He was the Clerk of Court of Oglethorpe County, member of Georgia House 1830-31, and Georgia State Senate in 1832-1833. He died 4 Sep 1848.
5. Anne or Nancy Collier born 6 Jan 1771 in Brunswick County, Virginia. She married John Hardeman. She died 21 Dec 1852.
6. Cuthbert "Cutty" Collier born 17 Jul 1773 in Brunswick County, Virginia, married Nancy Dickee on 13 Dec 1803 in Oglethorpe County, Georgia. Cuthbert served as a private dragoon in 3rd Regiment, GA Militia (Wilkes County) at Fort Mathews in 1793 during Oconee War. He moved to Monroe County, Georgia. A successful planter, Collier's Station is named for him. Cuthbert died 30 Apr 1845.
7. William Collier born Apr 1775 in Brunswick County, Virginia. He married Sallie Powell on 12 Oct 1801 in Oglethorpe County, GA. He married secondly Mahala Blade Brooks on 6 Jan 1820 in Oglethorpe Co., GA. He lived in Heard County, GA, in 1840 and it is debated whether he died there or in Coosa Co., AL, around 1845.
8. Vines Collier born 31 Jan 1777 in Brunswick County, Virginia. He married Dorothy Rafferty on 24 Dec 1805 in Oglethorpe County, Georgia and remained in that county. He served as a private in the 2 Reg't (Jenkins') Georgia Vols and Militia in the War of 1812. He died in 1830.

9. Benjamin Collier born 11 Feb 1779 in Brunswick County, Virginia. He married Ann "Polly" Howard in 1805. A successful planter, he was an early Judge of the Inferior Court of Crawford County, Georgia for 1834-1837. He died in Feb 1850.
10. Williamson Collier born 8 Jun 1781 in Brunswick County, Virginia. He married Jemina Powell on 6 Dec 1803 in Oglethorpe County, Georgia. Jemina was the sister of Sallie Powell, wife of his brother, William. He married 2nd Sarah Denson on 27 Nov 1822 in Greene Co., GA; he married 3rd Mary Ann Garland, widow of Edmond Powers ca 1834 in Upson Co., GA. He moved to the area of Upson and Monroe Counties in Georgia. Williamson died after 1860, probably in Upson Co., GA. Williamson is often confused with his brother William.
11. **Robert Collier** Virginia Collier Dennis direct ancestor detailed on following page.
12. Mary "Polly" Collier born 7 Dec 1788 in Oglethorpe County, married John H. Owen on 19 Dec 1803 in Oglethorpe County. They moved to Monroe County. She died 12 Nov 1867.
13. Sarah "Sallie" Collier born 4 Feb 1790 in Oglethorpe County, Georgia, married Harrison King Smith in 1804. They settled in DeKalb County, Georgia. She died 5 Oct 1857.

Vines Collier of York and Brunswick Counties, Virginia, was born about 1735. Before coming to Georgia, he served as Ensign and Lieutenant in the French and Indian War, according to his tombstone. He was an American patriot who rendered aid and materials during the American Revolution. Vines married Sarah Elizabeth Williamson in Brunswick County, Virginia, about 1759, according to family tradition. They moved to Wilkes County (now Oglethorpe County, Georgia) around 1785. Their home and the Vines Collier cemetery remain.

Robert Collier (Vines), was born 13 Nov 1783, according to Vines Collier's Bible record, probably in Virginia. Robert married Martha Marshall Booker of Putnam County on 1 May 1806. Robert emigrated from Oglethorpe County to Upson County before 1824, settling at The Rock. A pioneer settler of Upson, Robert was a large landowner and planter. Robert served four years in the Georgia House of Representatives (1826-27; 1835-36); he was also elected State Senator from Upson in 1841. He died on 6 Jan 1850 and his wife Martha died 27 May 1876. Robert was a trustee of the Upson Methodist Camp Ground.

Robert Marshall Collier (Robert, Vines) was born 9 November 1814 in Oglethorpe County, GA and migrated with his father to Upson County. Robert Marshall Collier was a planter and livestock dealer. He married Amanda Fletcher Green 24 December 1835. After Amanda died 22 Nov 1864, he married secondly in 1865 Susan Jane Green Whatley, widow of James G Whatley. Robert Marshall Collier died at The Rock, Upson County, GA, on 6 June 1895 and is buried nearby.

Isaac Cuthbert Collier (Robert Marshall, Robert, Vines) was born 24 June 1846; he married Sarah Elizabeth Means, 24 December 1865. Isaac Cuthbert, drafted into the Georgia State Guards near the end of the war, at the age of 17 served as a guard at Andersonville Prison; he also saw action in skirmishes around Ocean Pond and Lake City in Florida, known as the Battle of Olustee. He returned home after the war and became one of the largest cotton planters in middle Georgia and was involved in textile manufacturing. Isaac Cuthbert Collier's family lived in the Piedmont

District of Upson County (which became Lamar County). Isaac Cuthbert died 11 Jul 1908; his wife Sara died 18 Jan 1918.

Jena Cuthbert Collier (Isaac Cuthbert, Robert Marshall, Robert, Vines), born 5 November 1866, was the only child of Isaac and Sarah Elizabeth. He attended schools in Upson County and Gordon Institute; after graduating, he married Jessie Stephens on 18 January 1888. At an early age, Jena went into business, building one of the largest mercantile stores in middle Georgia. A former mayor of Barnesville, GA, Jena, or J C, was the first senator from Lamar County after its creation in 1920. While state senator of the 22nd District, he chaired the Senate Finance Committee. He and his father Isaac founded Collier Mills Inc in Barnesville, GA. After he retired from business, Jena devoted his efforts to his farm of some 2,500 acres. Mr. Collier also was a member of the Barnesville Methodist Church where he served as steward. He died in Atlanta on 23 Jun 1944. His wife Jessie died 24 Jan 1952 in Barnesville, GA.

Jena was the family historian and much of what is known about the Colliers is based on his research through letter writing to cousins; he also collected family Bibles and hired researchers in Virginia, New York City, and England to ferret out family records. He planned to write a book but never found time. Jena was proud of his ancestry and was a member of the National Society Sons of American Revolution and the Georgia Society of New York City.

Durward Cuthbert Collier (Isaac Cuthbert, Robert Marshall, Robert, Vines) was born on 3 May 1890 in Barnesville, GA, and died there on 12 January 1979. Durward (D. C.) attended Gordon Grammar and High Schools. Then he entered Georgia Tech and graduated with a BS degree in textile engineering in the class of 1911. He followed a career similar to that of his father, and was a farmer, cattleman, and official in several cotton mills. In 1928 Durward became the head of the Southern Manufacturing Co., cotton goods manufacturers, of Athens, GA, one of the largest textile plants in the South. Durward married Annie Reid McGarity on 20 January 1915; they had three children, Jena Cuthbert II, Robert Cuthbert Collier, and Virginia Collier. D. C. was a life member of the First Methodist Church.

Durward was a member of The National Society Sons of the American Revolution and The Society of Colonial Wars, Georgia Chapter.

Virginia Collier (Durward Cuthbert, Jena Cuthbert, Isaac Cuthbert, Robert Marshall, Robert, Vines), was born 22 June 1920 in Barnesville, GA to Durward Cuthbert and his wife Annie Reid McGarity Collier. She attended local schools and received advanced degrees from the University of Georgia. Virginia married William Wade Dennis on 31 May 1947. They had four daughters, only two survived her. Dr. Dennis received her MEd in 1969, her EdD in 1973. She was proud to be a member of UDC and DAR; her local chapter of DAR had been founded by her grandmother Jessie Stephens Collier. Virginia was a retired teacher and librarian of Gordon Military High School. Mrs. Dennis was the former owner, editor, & publisher of the Pike County Journal of Zebulon, GA and the Georgia Post of Roberta, GA, and was the author of the column "A to Z" in the Barnesville News Gazette for 25 years. She was a talented horticulturist, marionettist, and painter. Mrs. Dennis was a member of the Methodist Church.

Highlights of Collier Mills, Inc. (1898-1924)

1898: the original Collier plant was organized and built with the name Oxford Knitting Mills by J C Collier and his father I C Collier of Piedmont, GA. Mr. I C Collier died in 1908.

During this period, Mr. J C Collier was President; I C Collier (father)- Vice President and F Marvin Stephens (J C Collier's brother-in-law) was Treasurer and General Manager. J C Collier operated stores in Barnesville, with branches in Newnan and Thomaston.

In June 1911: Durward C Collier became Treasurer and General Manager at age 21 (received a Bachelor of Science degree at Georgia Tech). He succeeded his uncle who had joined Marshall Field and Co.'s North Carolina Mills.

Name changed from Oxford Knitting Mills to Collier Manufacturing Co. Inc. with J C Collier as President and D C Collier as Treasurer and General Manager.

1913: Ladies' lightweight union suits were added to the product offerings (underwear).

1913: Patented the COLLIER CUT ladies union suit.

Operated six mills on a Royalty basis for Canada exclusively.

1920: Name changed to Collier Mills, Inc. A new mill was added to produce boy's union suits in Macon, GA. A New York office was opened for selling and billing-direct to the Jobbing trade.

Merchandising methods were changing to go direct to the retailer—among them was the William Carter Co., Needham Heights, Mass.

1923: Discussions about a consolidations of the two firms on a 50-50 basis.

June 1923: Carter Collier Company was organized. The preferred stock in the new company was owned exclusively by J C Collier and D C Collier.

Sept 30, 1924: J C Collier and D C Collier sold their stock interest at a premium in the Collier Mills, Inc. and Carter Collier Co. to the William Carter Co., and ceased any further connection with the New England firm.

1924: Testimonial dated Aug. 15, 1924 signed by all of the 270 employees of the Carter Collier Co. plants in Barnesville and Macon, GA endorsing the candidacy of J C Collier for the Georgia State Senate. He became the first senator of Lamar County, representing Lamar, Bibb, Monroe and Pike Counties.